



# George Westinghouse: Gentle Genius

*Jr. Quentin R. Skrabec*

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## **George Westinghouse: Gentle Genius** Jr. Quentin R. Skrabec

The biography of George Westinghouse is rich in drama and in breadth, a story of power, city building, and applying the Golden Rule in business. His story intersects with those of many great personalities of the Gilded Age such as J.P Morgan, Henry Clay Frick, Andrew Carnegie, the Mellon Family, Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, and Nikola Tesla. One of the most successful industrialists in America, George Westinghouse was a wizard who took a much different approach than Thomas Edison. Westinghouse became a manager of innovation. He was not only an inventor in his own right, but the orchestra leader of a symphony of ideas. Westinghouse developed the corporate model of invention and research. Samuel Gompers said that "if industry had been run by men like Westinghouse, there would have been no need for unions." His innovations allowed Westinghouse to take the lead in electrical distribution. While it was Edison who first electrified New York City, the nation turned in favor of the AC current system of Westinghouse. His natural gas distribution system did more than Carnegie's capital to make Pittsburgh the Steel City. The panic of 1907 changed Westinghouse. It took the energy out of the industrial lion and resulted in a personal depression, which led to his death in 1914. A pioneer in pension plans and in planned communities for workers, Westinghouse was mourned by his employees, who collected money for a memorial to him in 1955. This testament to his life would have been the one he cherished the most. \*\*\* Quentin R. Skrabec, Jr. is a Pittsburgher with a strong background in the local stories and legends. He has published over fifty articles on history, industrial history and business, and five books on business, industry and management. He was awarded the first USA Today/Rochester National Quality Cup. Holding a PhD in Manufacturing Management from the University of Toledo, Dr. Skrabec has taught as an adjunct professor at Toledo, the University of Akron, University of Pittsburgh, and Robert Morris University. Presently he is an associate professor of business, teaching courses in operations management at Findlay University. In his management career, Dr. Skrabec has served as a manager and vice president at LSE/LTV Steel, Jessop, and National Steel. He led LSE/LTV to 33 Magazine's "manufacturing company of the year" and to Tom Peters' "100 Best-Managed Companies" list.

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